

Amherst's Leaky Landfill

The town is overlooking urgent problems with our landfill in order to rush the construction of a solar installation on a deteriorating landfill.



THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- **The clay layer ("the cap") has deteriorated:** it is only 4" in some places, half the thickness required by the DEP Closing Permit. The current standards require a **minimum of 18 inches**. In some places it not even clay, just silt and sand.
- The cap allows **150 times more** water to infiltrate than the original DEP requirements specified, and **1500 times more** than allowed by today's standards.
- **The landfill leaks:** as much as **940 gallons/acre/day** of leachate enters the groundwater, according to DEP documents.
- **Wetlands are contaminated:** the Hop Brook/Kestrel Lane area (only 100 yards away from the Lawrence Water Protection Area for the Town's drinking water wells) and the Gull Pond area already have elevated levels of **lead, mercury, arsenic**

and **cyanide**. DEP documents show that concentrations of mercury and arsenic have risen over the last 3 years.

- **Action is required** to avoid further contamination.
- **The planned regrading** adds more soil on top of the cap to reduce ponding, but **does not address the condition of the cap**, which is the main source of the leachate problem.
- **There are alternate remediation methods** that should be considered.
- **Installing over 20,000** photovoltaic modules on top of the landfill will make it **impossible to address** the leakage and perform future monitoring and maintenance.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

- **Over a thousand tons of industrial equipment** will be installed on our aging, unstable, unlined landfill. No long-term studies have been done on projects of this scale. BlueWave's own environmental engineers acknowledge that this is "**uncharted territory**".
- **The landfill is a leaky sponge** holding all the toxic contaminants. The weight of the proposed facility may compress the fill, causing the unidentified hazardous materials buried there to ooze out and pollute our groundwater.
- **No one knows the true status** or existing conditions of the entire landfill and its cap. Calculations are based on assumptions about the landfill and have not been tested in real world situations.

IF THE CAP IS DAMAGED...

- **Amherst's drinking water could be at risk.** One well has already been moved due to contamination.
- **There will be no way to fix it** once there is an industrial installation on top of the landfill without huge costs to the Town.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

- **The Town is proceeding at a very fast pace** to expedite a deal with BlueWave for a power plant.
- **Monitoring will not prevent problems from happening**, it will only let us know when a problem has already developed.

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED...

...to insist on seeing the details of the agreement before it is signed. Town Meeting has been asked to approve extending the legal limits of a contract signed by the Town Manager from 3 years to 30, without publication of the terms of the contract.

...to address the urgent problem of **leakage and contamination** before the landfill is covered with thousands of panels, making it impossible to fix.

Let's slow down, think and do what is right for the Town.

To join our mailing list and be notified of upcoming meetings and events, please contact us at: acresorg@gmail.com

Amherst Citizens for Responsible Solar
<http://www.acresgroup.org/>